

## A SHORT VISIT TO THE AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE MUSEUM

— By Dennis R. Fanucchi, museum executive director —

"Ships Made America" is the theme of the American Merchant Marine Museum, which is located on the McNulty Campus of the Academy in Kings Point, Long Island, New York. It was founded in 1979 as a national repository, historical and educational resource and exhibition center for the United States Merchant Marine Academy's collection of artifacts, artwork, ship models and nautical memorabilia that depict America's important maritime past and exemplify the important role our nation's merchant marine plays in commerce, transportation and defense today.

The museum holds an extensive collection of many rare and noteworthy items. It includes paintings by noted marine artists Hunter Wood, Antonio Jacobsen and Arthur Beaumont; an acclaimed collection of navigational instruments that date from the 18th century to the present day; and about 50 model ships. Some of the items on display were donated to the museum by the Maritime Administration.

The museum building itself was built in the early 20th century and has been designated a "Historic House" by the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities. The main building looks out on the New York City skyline and the Long Island

Sound with a commanding view of waterborne commerce on the sound.

The museum's highlights include the "Flagship Gallery" that displays a unique, cut-away model of a World War II-era Liberty ship; the double wheel of the USS *Constitution*; and two *Savannah* models, one of the first steamship to cross the Atlantic in 1819, and the other, a model of the 1962 nuclear-powered ship; a "Radio Room" that features a life-sized mannequin operating original, 1944 radio equipment from a World War II-era Victory ship; a "Tugboat Room" that features a golden eagle made of carved wood, which is a traditional feature of American tug boats; a gallery of 142 compelling photographs of all of the Kings Point Cadet Midshipmen who were lost in the Second World War; a world-class collection of navigational instruments including a very rare 12-inch diameter universal ring dial; and the third-oldest dated example of a back-staff, made in 1713; along with a century-old, fully-restored and operational steam engine.

The museum's next major project will chronicle the history of the United States Merchant Marine Academy decade by decade.



Courtesy photo

A massive, 19-ton World War II-era ship propeller — courtesy of the U.S. Maritime Administration — is on permanent display in front of the American Merchant Marine Museum located in Kings Point, N.Y.